

## **Blackhawk Technical College Public Safety & Transportation Center Referendum**

**Background:** After more than two years of research, planning and stakeholder engagement, the Blackhawk Technical College District Board has approved a \$32 million Public Safety and Transportation Center (PSTC) facilities project. On November 3, the college will seek voters' authority to fund the design and construction of the PSTC. The proposed project, immediately adjacent to BTC's Central Campus in Janesville, is a comprehensive training hub for the region's first responders and transportation workers.

Blackhawk Technical College's current public safety and transportation training programs are hindered by inadequate, undersized or nonexistent facilities for hands-on training. The proposed PSTC will provide BTC students and community partners with training facilities that are safe, local and comprehensive. This facility will provide essential first responders and transportation professionals with appropriately sized training areas and access to critical training equipment vital to their daily work and service to our communities.

The referendum will increase annual property taxes in Rock and Green Counties by \$3 per \$100,000 in assessed home value. This increase is expected to last for two years before BTC property taxes return to current levels. The reason that the tax impact is so low is the total equalized property value within the district: the larger the area and the higher the total property value, the lower the cost to individual property owners. Blackhawk Technical College serves 51 different municipalities. This larger geographic area results in greater property value, which lowers the referendum's property tax impact.

**Our Position:** Forward Janesville strongly supports Blackhawk Technical College's Public Safety and Transportation Center proposal and encourages voters to support it on November 3.

One of Forward Janesville's missions as an organization is to promote local education, and Janesville's great educational infrastructure makes Rock County and southern Wisconsin more attractive place to live and work. Blackhawk Technical College is an outstanding asset to our community, and their PSTC will be another arrow in Rock County's economic development quiver.

This facility, which will cost most taxpayers less than a meal at Culver's, will offer tremendous benefits to our communities. According to an independent study, the project will add more than \$83 million to the local economy by 2030. The facility will benefit local police and fire departments, transportation and logistics companies, and utility companies, and will make it easier for them to find the local employees they need to flourish. Further, the PSTC will enhance BTC's role as a leader in education and skills training. We expect the PSTC to become a world class training destination for companies and municipalities across the upper Midwest.

Forward Janesville believes that this referendum strikes the right balance between Blackhawk Technical College's facility needs and the property tax impact to the community. We strongly support this referendum and urge voters to invest in our area's educational future by voting YES on November 3.